



MONTEREY NEWS

March 2004
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The Town

March is a month that often stirs premature hopes here in New England. Warmer temperatures arrive, and we begin to look forward to the balmy days of spring, but those optimistic signs can often be defeated by a late snowstorm or blast of Arctic cold. Or, the warmer temperatures can prevail, but bring only mud season—likely to be a long one this year, given the depth of the frost. In any event, it's not yet the time of tulips-and-greener-pastures we long for. Patience is a virtue often cited as part of a classic

New England temperament and is surely learned through enduring long winters. Patience, too, is an asset in political life and the resolution of issues. Last month saw progress, if not yet resolution, on several fronts.

A Boat Ramp

The state responded to the Select Board's invitation and met with town officials on February 2nd. John Sheppard, Director of the Public Access Board of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement, came from Boston, Tom Keefe represented the

Fish and Wildlife office in Pittsfield, David O'Clair came from Trout Unlimited (an advocacy group interested in fishing), and various proponents from Monterey whose interest lies in finding a solution to the problem of year-round access gathered at Town Hall. The Select Board spoke with one voice: the current beach site is off the table, they are not interested in taking by eminent domain unless the seller is absolutely willing, and they are happy to help the state work toward a solution that is reasonable and fair. The state's representatives agreed that eminent domain does not seem like



Don Amstutz

Lake Garfield ice fishing trip goes awry. (See story p. 3)

the way to go, and if there is no town or county access that could be considered, then they would have to consider purchase of private land.

Several sites have been brought forward as possibilities, but the Kinne's Grove site seemed the most attractive idea, although it would probably take some modification to allow for adequate parking and a better road. Should any public access boat ramp be created, the state would ask the town to help to maintain the site's cleanliness through trash pickup, etc., and to police the area. There was also discussion about potential difficulties at Kinne's, primarily by those wondering if a large truck could get down the steep slope. But others pointed out that a 2-ton truck has in the past gone down that lane to stock fish from the site, and optimism continued that something might be achieved.

The Select Board has written to the Public Access Board, forwarding a copy of the meeting minutes, and inviting further discussion and a viewing of sites after the snow has gone.

School Budget

The massive job of building a budget for the schools is underway, with the hope that some of the ground lost last year might be reclaimed. There are, said Rick Mielke, two approaches to funding the schools: either start with here's what the schools need (not want, but need) and figure out how to fund it, or start from a position that says here's what we will spend and figure out how to get decent schools out of that amount. Monterey's support appears to be based on the first way, and the difficulties come when other towns do not agree with that. Funding becomes more critical at the local level because the state mandates programs and then does not fund them or reneges on promises of funding. Negotiations must

be undertaken with faculty and staff, and the cost of insurance continues to spiral upward.

Town Budget

Requests for departmental and committee budgets went out and should be back in the Finance Committee and Select Board's hands. There are, as there are in every year, both operating costs and capital items to consider, and work goes on to create budgets to bring to Town Meeting in May.

Unfunded state and federal mandates come into play here as well: for example, the state mandated regular inspection of dams, and for many years undertook those inspections themselves, but now insists it will be done (and paid for) by the towns. Director of Operations Maynard Forbes estimates the cost of such an inspection at around four thousand dollars. As the state has not yet determined what the requirements of such an inspection should be, their timetable with a January 1 deadline is meaningless, and the process has stalled since it's not even possible to get bids on so vague a proposition.

Another example is the federal mandate that the town shed and transfer areas be redesigned and rebuilt to cover salt and sand and contain runoff. Both areas should be redesigned as one area, Forbes thought, to create better traffic flow and solve multiple problems with a coordinated approach to planning. There is also a leak in the roof at the town shed, so attention needs to be paid to that 20-year-old roof.



Town Truck

Director of Operations Forbes will be looking for a replacement for the Oshkosh, the town's 20-year-old plow/sander/truck. Other towns, he reported, have invested in other brands that are not designed and built specifically for the job, to their regret. The four-wheel drive component, he said, is an after-market addition and often breaks down given the heavy use of the equipment, so repair costs are high, the equipment is out of commission, and repairs are often possible only at a considerable distance. The Oshkosh model is usable year-round, and Forbes will seek bids that include a trade-in of the current equipment. The Select Board, which has a schedule to projected capital outlays for the next several years, thought that the town will look to continue increasing the amount of money in the stabilization fund to cover just such large ticket items as they come up.

Spring will, of course, come eventually, and with it bring green grass and color in the garden as well as resolution of this year's annual budget questions and progress toward solving current issues. Those of us who have been around for more than one season, however, remember that the warmth of spring also eventually encourages the hatch of black flies—a good reminder that there's never perfection in any season. The plan at the moment, however, is to stay hopeful while not putting away the snow shovel just yet. The time to swap it for bug spray and garden hoes will come soon enough!

— K. Wasiuk

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The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.

Hard Water Fishing

Ice fishermen at the coffee club in Monterey, in their lighter moments, like to refer to their sport as *hard water fishing*. This winter January was the second coldest month in more than a hundred years, and the ice on many local lakes was more than a foot thick. However Lake Garfield is annually drawn down, bringing the surface closer to warmer springs and the narrow flowing stream running almost its entire length. That is where you need to know where the water is hard enough to support your weight and where it is not, or you might "swim with the fishes"!

Ice fishing here is a popular and healthy country tradition, and those who ply their craft are as dedicated as the most ardent fly fisherman in April. The Isaak Walton League on February 1st held a very well attended ice fishing derby, a family affair, on Lower Spectacle Pond. Some did drive their vehicles out on the ice, but tailgating is not recommended. The idea is to get out of a couch potato comfort zone and cabin fever that sets in at this time of year. Native Americans cut a hole in the ice with primitive tools.

George Emmons



Dana Crane lands his catch.

They even used wooden fish decoys to lure trout up to the hole where they could be hooked, snared, or speared. Today ice fishing is still traditionally rugged.

Just one day after Friday the thirteenth, some hardy visitors from Chicopee drove a new GMC pickup truck down the Lake Garfield boat ramp and across the ice for a day of fishing. They proceeded about a quarter of a mile where destiny awaited just before the small island that separates the channel of shallow running water from the main part of the lake. They failed to notice what they should have seen—the color of the surface ahead that spelled thin ice. First the front wheels went in and they got the doors open. Then the rear end of the truck gradually sank as well to the shallow bottom. When the men finally got into town to get help,

their faces were red from the cold and from embarrassment.

As their actions were illegal and ill-advised they got little sympathy except at the General Store, which later sent down sandwiches. This must have been a bright spot in a day gone very wrong that lasted until just before dark when a timber skidder got close enough to pull the vehicle out. Dana Crane, Bonnie Marx's brother, had helped extract vehicles before and showed how to cut the ice away from the body so it could be moved. It turned out to be a very expensive adventure for the men from Chicopee, who came in good spirits, but went home perhaps talking like Grumpy Old Men.

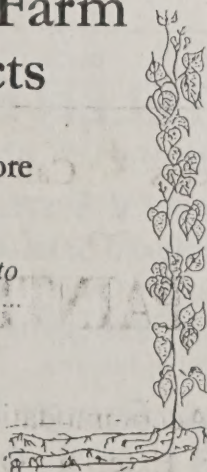
— George Emmons

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Basketmaking Workshop

The Monterey Cultural Council will host a basketry workshop on Saturday, March 20, in the church basement, taught by Wendy Jensen, well-known basketmaker from Great Barrington.

There will be two basketry sessions during the day: 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and 1 p.m.–4 p.m., with a different basket taught in each session. These workshops are for people 16 and over only, all levels of experience, but particularly geared toward the beginner. (We hope to hold a basketry workshop for children later in the year.)

In the morning workshop session students will be making a berry basket, a small round basket using rattan. Students will learn the basics of basket making, including, laying out a base, upsetting, weaving, rimming and lashing. The dimensions of the berry basket are approximately 8" high x 4" in diameter.

In the afternoon session students will be making a bread basket, a rectangular basket also made of rattan. Similar techniques to those from the morning workshop will be taught. The dimensions of the bread basket are approximately 5" wide x 4" high x 9.5" long. Color accents will be introduced for a personalized basket.

Students are welcome to sign up for both workshops, but registration in the second session will only be permitted if space is available.

Wendy G. Jensen is an award-winning basketmaker living in Great Barrington. Her work can be seen at sev-

Notice to Voters about March 2nd Primary

Town Clerk Barbara Swann reports that citizens voting for the first time in Monterey need to bring some form of identification, preferably a driver's license, with them to the polls to vote in the March 2nd primary. This requirement is part of the recently enacted federal American Voters Act.

eral juried craft shows in New England and New York. She has taught basketmaking at many private facilities, craft schools, and museums and in her studio. Her work was most recently seen in *Early American Life* magazine's Directory of Craftsmen and more locally, *The Paper*. Most recently in Monterey she was one of our exhibitors at our "How's It Made?" event last August.

The cost for each session is a materials fee of \$15.00; class registrations will be strictly limited to 12 students (16 and over) per session (this means, register now instead of last-minute!). To register, call Lois Ryder (528-2548) to reserve your place, then send your check, made payable to the Monterey Cultural Council, with your name, address, and phone number to Lois Ryder, 195 Main Rd. Monterey, Great Barrington, MA 01230 (note this is a Great Barrington address!).

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Monterey Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

ZBA Alternate Sought

The Monterey Zoning Board of Appeals is seeking an alternate to fill a current vacancy. The complete board consists of five members and two alternates; the alternates serve as needed when regular members are unable to attend a hearing. As provided for in the Monterey Zoning Bylaw, the ZBA hears applications for variances and special permits, and hears appeals of decisions by town boards or officials. The calendar of hearings is irregular and unpredictable, as it depends solely on citizen applications. Some public hearings are completed in one session, others run to two or three meetings. In 2003, for example, the ZBA heard applications for five special permits and one variance. Several of these hearings were continued beyond the initial session. Consistency of personnel is required of all hearings; thus whenever an alternate sits for a regular board member at a particular hearing, he or she must continue sitting for that hearing until a decision is reached. Alternates are asked to attend all hearings and to become familiar with issues that come before the ZBA. Members are elected for five-year terms on a rotating schedule, with one position open each year. Alternates are appointed by the ZBA chairperson. Anyone interested in becoming an alternate should please contact Peter Murkett at 528-9937.

— Peter Murkett, Chair,
Monterey Zoning Board of Appeals

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Gould Farm Dinner Dance Gala Benefit and Raffle

Gould Farm, with residential psychiatric communities in Monterey, Lincoln, and Waltham, Massachusetts, is hosting its Sixth Annual Dinner Dance Gala and raffle Friday evening, April 16, at Gedney Farm in New Marlborough. Monterey residents Barbara and Dick Tryon will co-chair the event. Other committee members are Claudette Callahan, Pierre Duhon, and Rita Kasky of New Marlborough; Julie Colello, Rev. Elizabeth Goodman, Gige O'Connell, John Otenasek, and Cate Tower, all from Monterey; Dale Drimmer and Audrey Wilner from Mill River; Steve Kahn from Sandisfield; Betsey McKearnan from Stockbridge; Judy Moss from Lenox; and Peg Russell from Westport, Mass.

Among the top raffle prizes are a week in a Kauai, Hawaii, condo; a weekend in a Greenwich Village apartment, and a 250-year-old hand-carved stone tablet. Cocktails begin at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:15 p.m. and the raffle drawing at 9 p.m. Winners need not be present. Vicky True and Friends, as well as Bottom of the Bucket, a trio of talented musicians from Gould Farm who are currently featured in venues around the tri-state area, will perform.

For more than 90 years Gould Farm has been providing respectful treatment for adults schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and other psychiatric diagnoses. While the Farm has inspired and encouraged the development of similar programs across the country, it remains unique in its fundamental philosophy of accepting appropriate guests (clients) regardless of the limits of their financial resources, offering a sliding fee scale for those who are in need.

The Farm, located in Monterey, and its transitional programs in the Boston area, provide family-like environments where clients can learn to live and work with the extremely debilitating effects of their illnesses. Many have lost relationships and are disconnected from their natural environments. A balanced program of clinical support, meaningful work and socialization helps guests regain their roles as valuable and productive members of society.

Noted one guest, "I wanted to hide my illness, deny it, pretend that it didn't exist. But the longer I did that the greater the distance I felt between me and the world."

For more information about Gould Farm, to make a reservation for the gala or to purchase raffle tickets, call Rita Kasky or Sandy Collins at 413-528-1804.

Pick Up Daffodils Wednesday, March 23

DON'T FORGET to pick up your daffodils from the Cancer Drive at the Monterey General Store on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23rd. There may be leftovers that could be purchased then also.

A big thank-you goes to lots of silent partners in this project. We have a few new workers each year, but many of them just hang in there from year to year. Many hands (or phones in this case) make light work.

SO—to the telephoners, we appreciate your time in helping. They are: Denise Andrus, Theresa Amstead (new), Leona Chamberlin, Ruth Champigny, Barbara Dahlman, Ann Dinan (new), Carol Edleman, Stephanie Grotz, Maureen Hough, Pam Johnson (new), Michele Miller, Julie (new) at Gould Farm.

Cynthia will again distribute to the elderly or housebound in town, and the Coffee Club is footing most of that bill. Thanks to both. Bonnie at the General Store is more than cooperative by taking orders and being the distribution spot for the daffodils. Appreciate it Bonnie!

Pat Mielke always takes care of the finances—collecting the money from the workers, delivering it to the A.C.S., and listing all the donors for Bonnie at the store, as well as taking orders. Thanks Pat!

Looking forward to a good year, and we shall be back next year. Also thanks to all of you who supported the effort—a good cause, and the flowers are so cheerful at this time of year. It's been fun. See you in April.

— Fran Amidon

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History Gets High-tech Boost at Bidwell House

Hanging upon the weathered, old wooden walls of the Bidwell House Museum's Keeping Room is a wrinkled piece of parchment encased in glass. Scrawled here in fading black ink is a list of everyday household objects once owned by the house's original occupant, the Reverend Adonijah Bidwell. Punch bowls, chairs, spoons, and crockery: although these items may have been fairly commonplace back in 1787, when the document was written, today they, like the document that describes them, are valuable treasures, rare remnants of a time long past.

When, in the 1960s, the house was purchased and restored by New York designers Jack Hargis and David Brush, they used this document as a reference as they sought out the collection of antiques, so that they might fill the house with exactly the items that the Reverend owned.

Today, thanks to a grant from Berkshire Taconic Foundation and the efforts of the museum's newly installed directors, this centuries-old inventory is being brought into the digital age. The \$1,500 grant, recently announced by Jennifer Dowley, President of Berkshire Taconic, was followed up by a pledge of \$2,700 from the museum's own Board of Directors, setting into motion the first phase of a large electronic collection cataloguing.

This funding has allowed the museum to purchase new computer equipment and software and to hire computer technician Adam Goodman of Monterey



Robert Oakes

to set up a network that will eventually give the public access to their database both in person and on-line.

"Scholars will be able to come in with a lap-top and hook into the wireless network or visit our website to get images and information about the objects in the collection," said Brian O'Grady, the museum's executive director. O'Grady added that this improved database and network will be of great use to students in local high schools and colleges who are interested in early American history. To this end, the museum hopes to engage in more collaborative projects with the schools in the future, he said.

The grant also provides a stipend for a part-time staff member to help with entering the information into the new database. O'Grady said they also hope to

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get volunteers who would be interested in helping with this historic project.

During the initial phase of the project, all available information on each of the objects now located in three of the museum's rooms will be entered into the database. This includes the objects' use, their age, value, where and when they were acquired, as well as sketches or photos of them.

A second grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services in Washington, D.C. if approved, will allow for the cataloguing of the remaining items. O'Grady said they will learn whether this has been approved in September.

The Bidwell House Museum is an elegant Georgian saltbox built c. 1750 as a parsonage for Adonijah Bidwell and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The beautifully restored house is surrounded by 196 acres of woods, gardens, and hiking trails. The Museum will reopen for the season on May 29, Tuesday through Sunday, 11 to 4 p.m., through October 13. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$2 for children. Appointments can be made to visit the museum in the off season by calling 413-528-6888.

Berkshire Taconic Foundation is a nonprofit organization that cultivates philanthropy in ways that have a positive impact in Berkshire, Columbia, north-

Fiddler in the Basement at March Community Dinner

The Community Dinner Season continues to roll along. Last month, Michael Johnson presented a program about his work promoting the United Nations International Day of Peace, a global event that takes place every year on September 21. He showed a video that explained how the IDP came to be, and solicited suggestions for ways we in Monterey could commemorate the IDP this year locally. He's especially interested in working to spread the word of the IDP to schools in Berkshire County. The slogan of the IDP is "Peace begins with just one day." Thank you, Michael, for bringing your work home to us!

Our next dinner will be on March 10th and will feature local musician and Gould Farm volunteer Eric Martin. A

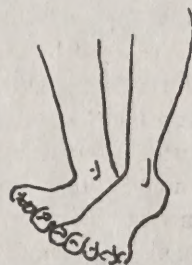
east Dutchess and northwest Litchfield. For more information please contact Berkshire Taconic at 800-969-2823 or visit www.berkshiretaconic.org.

— Robert Oakes

This article appears courtesy of the Berkshire Record.

classically trained violinist and a member of the trio Bottom of the Bucket, Eric seems to know no bounds when it comes to musical talent. His program will be a talk and demonstration of the difference between classical violin technique and fiddling. He will show us various fiddling styles and traditions and share with us, in his words, "other random things I sort of know about."

The potluck meal will begin at 6 p.m. in the downstairs fellowship hall of the meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with the whole community as well as place settings for yourself and others in your party. The program will begin roughly at 7 and will end by 8. All are welcome!



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Marta Makuc

Instructor Rebecca Tamol Kay (far right) leads the group in the Chicken Dance! From left to right are Joseph Makuc, Franny Huberman, Bob Carlson, Jonah Carlson, Gabriella Makuc, Darcie Drew, and Shawna Stanton, among others.

The Stars in Monterey

Did you know that if our sun were envisioned as a softball here in Monterey, the next nearest star would be a tennis ball in Las Vegas?

That's just one of the many helpful facts we learned February 20th in the church basement during the Cultural

Council's astronomy program. We did not have good luck with the weather for this event, but in spite of cloudy skies a good number of people came to the church for an educational and lively evening. Richard Sanderson, Curator of Physical Science at the Springfield Science Museum, where he is Planetarium Director, and Jack Megas, President of the Springfield Stars Club, enlightened us with knowledge about using sky charts, the history of telescopes and binoculars, and the structure of our Milky Way Galaxy and the Universe. Their presentation concluded with a slide show, "Dipper Full of Stars," which included many spectacular

shots of objects in our galaxy as well as depictions of familiar constellations. The best part was learning how to use those easily-recognized star patterns to find your way around the sky. This program was supported in part by a grant from the Monterey Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. If you are interested in an evening or two (clear ones, that is) with a telescope here in town, drop a postcard with your name and phone number to Joe Baker, PO Box 332, Monterey, MA 01245. We'll try to find a time to admire the sights of the evening sky.

Peter S. Vallianos **Attorney at Law** **528-0055**

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Green Corner: Battery Disposal

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• **TYPE:** Alkaline. **USE:** 9-volt, D, C, AA, AAA. **DISPOSAL:** Regular trash.

• **TYPE:** Button. **USE:** Hearing aides, watches, cameras. **DISPOSAL:** Household hazardous waste collection, or recycle at some jewelry stores.

• **TYPE:** Rechargeable. **USE:** Appliances, power tools, camcorders, radios, cellular phones. **DISPOSAL:** Recharge, then bring to the Town Transfer Station or save for HHW collection for recycling.

• **TYPE:** Lithium. **USE:** AA, C, 9-volt, computers, cameras. **DISPOSAL:** Save for HHW collection

REDUCE YOUR IMPACT

* Purchase products that don't require batteries, such as kinetic watches and solar powered calculators.



Marta Makuc

Justin Makuc made it under the Limbo stick while (front to back) Gabriella Makuc, Shawna Stanton, and Darcie Drew waited their turns.

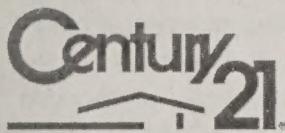
* Return car batteries to service station for recycling.

* Find out where to recycle Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cad), Nickel Metal Hydride (No-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion) and Small Sealed Lead by calling (800) 8-BATTERY or visit www.rbr.org for collection locations.

For more information on recycling or other waste management issues, please

contact Joy Kirschenbaum at 413-445-4556, joyk@cetonline.org, or visit CET's website at www.cetonline.org. CET is a community resource conservation organization serving western Massachusetts since 1976.

— Joy Kirschenbaum,
Waste Management Specialist, CET



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the death of time

it's never too late to write
tea verse or love poems
the one I found in your snow print
was a sign of prosperity
was it you who fell face down
drunk on a draught of stars?
or Dylan or Whitman or Frost?
without poetry life is a dry
detour through a starless landscape
you never went to the museum
of fine arts or the fine wine tasting
you got stuck on the corner
telling it like it really is
daring to love your honey
I don't know how long we can go
on like this, love notes in star dust
but I do know Barolo helps
enchant me again with new songs
of fading summer: cricket songs —
the last lily — the death of time
we're snowed in, cold, deep mid-winter
I almost forgot to drop this
poem in my snow print for you:

"seasons transmigrate through celebration
autumn's empty wine bottles gather
exhausted on the basement floor

(spring's full ones patiently sitting)
we keep working our asses off
for safe havens, for poetry
while maniacs still play at war
but brotherhood is inescapable
and love, the legacy of stars"

when you wake up to a white world
with white arms reaching out to you
like Bodhidharma and Li Po
like Hui Neng, Gary and Philip
like Jack and Hayden, you realize
beauty becomes the painting hand
of ephemerality and
the next song we sing may be
of our own small vanishing throats
or how we got stranded in the
blizzard of our sacred desires

the next time you come for tea
bring your axe and hack saw to cut
to the truth immediately
those snow prints may be hard as steel
this communion may be our last:
a last chance to sing in cricket
to croon away those lily blues

— R. Zukowski



To Anyone Who Has Been a Child, or Wished They Could Be

*Once upon a time, he loved bedtime
it meant stories and shadows from the rocking horse*

*Now he gets up so bleary, crooning for caffeine —
forgetting it was once a bitter brew*

*He was sitting on the porch,
Band-Aid on his knee*

*It didn't seem possible that one day,
life would cough up drudgery*

*It was tiring to be a boy,
dreaming of the South Seas*

*He wanted to curse, wear keys
and grip the wheel of a deep-blue Chevy*

*One day, the boy disappeared —
all that was left were a few matchbox cars*

*In his place, a man rode the subway,
scowling out the window,
being the citizen a world demands*

*He would have stayed starched & stagnant
if not for a child reflecting in the glass
Was it his own face?*

*Heaven has little use for porcelain and property,
only children can teach us not to trip on our wings
as we fly through the gates . . .*

*So he doodled on his billfold,
danced the funky-chicken for his wife,
chewed a pack of bubble gum —
threw off his shoes
and awoke . . .
with his feet in the sky.*

— M. Hamilton

Three fates

*One more lovely than the sun
looks back
upon dalliance and daisies
ribbons in water
a sky cradle
billowing veils
of bliss*

*one busier than the moon
bent over
a loom of fretted dreams
dark tangled hopes
shredded hoops
thistling over a dusty
abyss*

*one with my own somehow face
turned away
to meet that fey old stranger
wrinkle-walking
perhaps wiser
coming down death-steps
with a kiss.*

— A. O. Howell

Sloppy Housekeeping, Enchantment, and Death

She has been dead a week now and what a relief. All the time she lived in the kitchen I felt wretched, except maybe when she first emerged and I was so enchanted with her I forgot what can happen when a person messes with the natural order of things. It's so easy to forget.

To begin at the beginning (well, not The Beginning, but we are so far along now that there just isn't time to go back There), we—okay I guess it was "T"—found a couple of fuzzy yellow caterpillars last fall sometime and being a lifelong nature bug and a tamperer too, I put them in a jar. Being a sloppy housekeeper, I put the jar on the kitchen counter and it was able to stay there all these months without needing to be put away somewhere. I have way too much tolerance for things not being put away. I can see my mother rolling her eyes from heaven right now.

Where I should have put the jar is down in the guest room, which is unheated. Then this whole tragedy would not have happened, although I realize there is a good chance some other tragedy would have filled in the space nicely.

Still, this is the tragedy I am talking about at the moment. The premature emergence and subsequent, consequent death of a perfect creature, a creature with a path all its own plus the fatal power to enchant a large sloppy housekeeping busybody.

I put the two caterpillars in the jar and gave them carrot tops until they settled up under lid of the jar in their cocoons. Suddenly they looked familiar. I used to see these fuzzy cocoons when I was a kid



Yellow Woolly Bear

here in Monterey. They would appear on the white clapboards of the house on Keyes Corner. They liked to set up just under the edge of a board. I think these caterpillars go UP until they hit a ceiling of some sort and then they stop and rearrange their bristles into a sort of sleeping

bag with a pupa inside. They wait out the winter like this and then in May they turn into pure white moths, cleaner than any snow, with long plumelike antennae that are white also but with black fringes. This is exquisite under a hand lens, like looking at the moon through binoculars: bright and dark so crisp and clear you become enchanted.

There are also spots: one on each forewing and four on each hindwing, as well as a few along the belly, which is not white but creamy. Right at the mouth there are some parts called femora and coxae and these are orange and rusty, so lovely against the white. The eyes are bigger than you would think, deep black and velvet. She was a beauty and she was mine.

I had to figure out what to do next. I thought of water and slid a drop down the jar to her a couple of times a day, but I never saw her drink. I thought of letting her go, but it was 9 below zero and she would have fallen like a stone, or a leaf, or a potato chip. I considered the unlikely possibility of her living somehow in the jar until May, when she could take up her natural life again: fly, mate, lay eggs, get eaten by a blue jay. Even if she had lived, I am afraid the trauma of

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her life in the jar would have made her unfit for her original path.

After three weeks, she died at last. That was days ago and I still have her in front of me, though she is greatly diminished. She must have become active at night, beating against the jar, because she was looking ragged by the time she escaped her life. I guess she is in heaven with Mom, rolling her eyes at me. And meanwhile, I still have the other cocoon to worry about. I can't take it into the guest room now, I don't think. It is probably speeded up like the first one and ready to pop out any day. Maybe this one will be a male—I felt the first one was female because its abdomen seemed so big and because generally it held still, the way they do when they are putting out the pheromones so the lighter males can find them and fly to them. I used to watch her waiting there on the twig in the jar. I was thinking about all those futile pheromones wafting around our sterile kitchen.

What is there for me to do now? I saw her, grabbed her, got high on her, messed her up, learned a little bit about her, wrote

Highland Communities Initiative March Events

Preparing For Growth: Alternative Subdivisions

March 16, 7 p.m., Chesterfield Senior Center

Help your community prepare for future growth! Land-use attorney Joel Russell will be leading this workshop about creative subdivision regulations,

about her. I identified her. She is a yellow woolly bear moth, *Diacrisia virginica*. As a caterpillar she was tufty-looking, with yellow legs, and as a moth she was an arrested miracle. As human beings we are generally comfortable with our role in the world, arresting miracles like we do. Every now and then we get uncomfortable, thank goodness. This turned out to be her path: discomfiting me. In fact, we were in it together.

— Bonner J. McAllester

such as cluster developments and open-space residential design. Learn what these zoning regulations are, how they differ from each other, and how they can benefit your community. \$5, Open to all.

Reading the Forested Landscape with Tom Wessels

March 27, 7 p.m., Williamsburg Grange

A presentation by noted naturalist and author Tom Wessels that brings alive the intricate and evolving story of our region's landscape by using clues such as trees and stone walls to unravel a forest's history of storms, logging, blight, fire and abandoned agriculture. Cosponsored by the Williamsburg Grange. Free and open to all.

For more information and weather cancellations, contact Wendy Sweetser at 413-587-0716 x14 or wsweetser@ttor.org.

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Sun Sign of the Snow Geese

At this station of the zodiac, and this moment in time, when the flocks of snow geese finally pass overhead, their white wings wave like banners to symbolize the flags of winter's surrender. On their long migration toward the Arctic Circle, the passage generally is unseen because they are up so high. Most of us are busy looking at what we are doing or where we are going, rather than squinting into the sun. The chilled stillness of the pale blue sky of early spring is barely broken by the faint clamor of their distant clarion. But when it happens, it is a moving inspiration that calls from above.

I am told by old-timers here that flocks of hundreds occasionally descend to lakes and ponds along the Housatonic River valley, drawn to open waters as a welcome refuge to rest and feed. Winters, like the last, can be hard at this latitude in the Northern Hemisphere. In the past, when winters were even harder, the flocks, then numbering in the thousands, must have been a welcome seasonal sun sign to Native Americans. As their formations came coasting down the sky, the commotion of wing beats and festive gaggling gave visual testimony to the unending cycle of earthly reincarnation. The Indian name for snow goose sounded something like *weh aweh*, and soon they would

be on their way, with something of a magnetic compass in their heads taking them far away to the tundras of their migrational origin.

Geese migrate for their own survival. On Brewer Pond, just across the road from the Town Beach, a lone Canada goose was left behind because due to injury it could not fly for any distance. When ice flows of the coldest January in a hundred years closed open waters around the edges, muskrats slept under thermal layers of grass huts, but the walls of winter were closing in around the Canada goose. Yet it survived, partly through the humane intervention of Monterey naturalists. In the dead of winter, kernels of corn were cast upon the edges of diminishing pools, and when they closed entirely, they were opened again by wading out in rubber boots. Even a rustic wooden frame of a lean-to was placed there as a windbreak. An attempt was then made to net the lone sentinel of a season past by a person who had experience in rescuing injured wildlife, particularly geese. But the bird's natural instinct to avoid capture prevailed, sort of a "live free or die" spirit wild creatures are born with. Just a week or two away from liberated waters with a break in the weather, it was caught by a fox. Only feathers up against a bank, and tracks in the snow that circled around

and then made a final rush, told the end of the tale.

Canada geese are supposed to mate for life, which may add to the pathos of the story. I personally believe that as in our own marriage vows, the commitment states "as long as you both shall live" and that the laws of Mother Nature allow one partner to mate again when the other dies. But I don't know for sure. When the snow geese pass through, it is the season of renewal. Spiritually when the Northern Hemisphere of the earth is rotating out of prevailing darkness to greet the direct rays of the sun, the momentum seems to carry with it the power of creation of living things. This power, like the pendulum of a mythical grandfather clock in the sky, is the same force that moves planets through the heavens. And the rotation of the planets is the mechanism that gives us some measure of a life cycle. When one cycle is completed, it carries forward without interruption to the beginning of another. Look upward and rejoice at visions of the eternal wonder that now pass overhead.

— George Emmons

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A Daughter's Tribute to Shirley Pearl

On Wednesday, February 18, 2004, my beloved mother, Shirley Pearl, passed away peacefully after enduring a long, and arduous illness. Though she and Bud had moved last April to Lenox to be closer to me and my family, their hearts were always in Monterey.

Having been one of the original "settlers" of second homeowners in the early '70s when others hadn't yet discovered Monterey, they first built a home on Bidwell Road with majestic views of Lake Garfield. Their weekends became their salvation throughout the year when they would finish work in New York on Fridays and head up to the Berkshires, even in zero visibility weather! Gradually, their friends ended up buying homes in the Berkshires and their social life widened until they ended up making it their permanent home in the early '80s. Meanwhile, Shirley gave up her thriving real estate business in New York and decided to open her own in the Berkshires since she was always driving her friends and friends' friends around anyway. Thus, Berkshire Properties was born.

What Shirley loved most about Monterey was that despite its intimate size, it was full of the most interesting, talented and passionate people she had ever met. And it was so progressive-minded for a country village! She and Bud loved the Wednesday night potluck

dinners held at the Monterey church, as well as the I Love Monterey Day festivals (we still have some of the original T-shirts from that time). And how they loved the Steak Roast each summer when the entire community came together to celebrate! We recently reminisced about how much we enjoyed hosting Japanese students many years ago, who of all unlikely places made their way to Monterey for an all-too-short weekend!

Shirley loved the fact that there was a rustic quality to Monterey not found anywhere else, and the way the town was conservation conscious, with limited use of road salt, and how so many people so generously donated their land to keep open spaces . . . and how she loved Lake Garfield! The memories come flooding back when I think of how my sisters and I spent endless summer days together with our friends and parents in laughter and utter bliss both on our own beachfront and on the town beach where we would mingle and meet so many old and new friends.

The happiest memories of our life will be those times the family spent together in Monterey. Today, I had an urge to drive back to Monterey to try to recapture it all over again. Memories came flooding back to me . . . from the familiar faces at the General Store and the post office, to the clean, country smells, and the uncanny amount of snow still lingering when here in Lenox it is nearly all gone . . . and the light shining its unique way through the tall pines. These are the memories I want to preserve. Somehow,

I get the feeling that a hundred years from now Monterey will be no different, and I know that would please my mother.

Despite the fact that Shirley could no longer read for herself, or even hold the paper, she eagerly waited for each issue of the *Monterey News* to arrive and invariably made one of us read each and every word so she would not miss out on anything! She especially loved the creative writings and drawings that were featured.

Yesterday, while filling my birdfeeder, I felt compelled to look up, way up to the tallest tree that reaches over 150 feet high, and was exhilarated to gaze upon a magnificent white-phase gyrfalcon. It was as if an angel were perched on the limb to bring a message to me and my family to assure us that our mother is safely on her journey. It took our breath away.

My lovely mother died the way she lived, peacefully, full of exceptionally good nature and love. She was a blessing to those who knew her and her loss is without measure. The world was a better place with Shirley in it, but she will live on through her family, and the special people, beauty, and magic of Monterey.

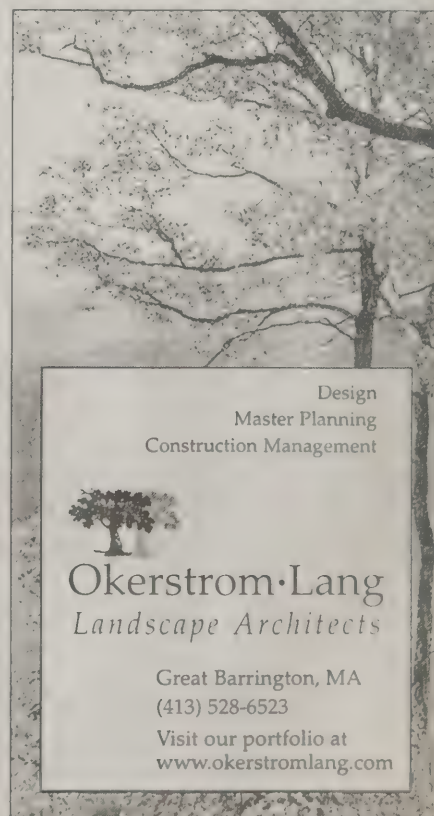
— Ellen Pollen




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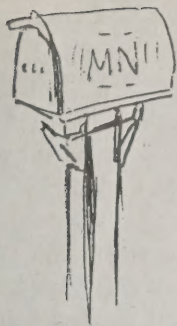


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Too Much Power for an Unelected Board?

To the Editor:

Monterey's residents, both full-time and summer, may not fully realize yet the consequences of what took place last spring. Great power and broad new authority were handed over to one town board. It is authority equal to, perhaps exceeding, that granted by the voters to their elected Select Board, only this board was never voted into office. Its members are appointed.

No one in this powerful body is ever answerable to the public weal. Yet, this group's decisions already play a pivotal role in nearly every landowner's calculations, and now, after last spring's action, promise to affect even more aspects of everyday Monterey life. What's more, the added new powers are sure to cost homeowners plenty in time, aggravation, and expense.

At last May's annual town meeting, voters approved adoption of the deceptively sweet-sounding Scenic Mountain Act. This measure's wording delegates

administration and enforcement of a broad and complex new law to Monterey's Conservation Commission—the *unelected* Conservation Commission.

Unlike the other critical boards in town, Conservation Commission members do *not* answer to voters via the ballot box even though commission decisions on wetlands issues have for years affected nearly every property owner at one time or other. The commission is made up of full-time residents appointed to staggered terms by the Select Board.

To the commission's credit, its well-intentioned appointees work hard and give of their free time to do thankless, at times arduous tasks. Even now these folks are formulating exactly what altitudes and slopes in town will define the scope of the new act.

With its new powers though, commission decisions will affect property owners in areas never before imagined. Matters before it will range from the complex to the simple, from applications for building permits (you thought the Select Board and Board of Appeals were hurdles?) to whether or not you can landscape/clear trees on your property as you see fit (are you really prepared to suffer through yet another tedious hearing process each time you want to cut trees on your own land?).

A law with altruistic intentions, to protect ridge lines and scenic vistas in Monterey, will now almost certainly devolve, based upon the unelected commission's own 30-year track record, into endless rounds of bureaucratic boondoggle forced upon each and every property

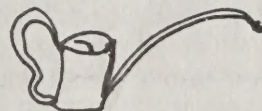
owner. With the commission's already overloaded docket, negotiating a new obstacle course of 'Scenic' rules will likely be just as bad or worse than the already torturous Wetlands process.

Of course, associated with this new burden upon the homeowner will be money, lots of it, when the unsuspecting applicant finds it necessary to hire pricey engineers and consultants to respond to the commission's inevitable requests for surveys and documentation (cataloging your property's specific altitudes and slopes) to comply with the new act.

To sum up: a town board with overbroad authority and zero accountability to voters is administering a new law that is burdensome and guaranteed to result in extra expense and aggravation to each and every homeowner.

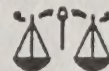
I wish someone would explain to me exactly how and why this is good for the town and its people.

— Glenn M. Heller



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Newton Abercrombie Revisited

To the Editor:

I appreciated very much the article in your February issue by George Emmons about Newton Abercrombie.

In the summer of 1949 I attended a Sunday service at the Monterey Congregational Church with my fiancé, Jana Burch. To the best of my knowledge that was the first time I entered such a Puritan establishment and I was alert to all the proceedings. I recall The Reverend Ray Ward emerging from a mysterious chamber to the right to approach the pulpit and Mrs. Miner struggling with the stubborn stops on the organ. But what impressed me most was a spirited rendition of "Whispering Hope" sung by a small choir. The rolling bass part was performed with obvious delight by a man in late middle age who I learned was Mrs. Miner's brother, Newton Abercrombie, the Town Librarian.

Over the years I encountered Mr. Abercrombie in the library many times. His demeanor combined with his name and his accent to fit my image of the dour New Englander. His manner was so glum that I feared he did not approve of my taste for Philo Vance and Archie Goodwin. Then, in the summer of 1966 I was asked to lead a Sunday service. Seeing that Mr. Abercrombie was still in the choir, I mentioned that ancient offering of "Whisper-



Stella and John Bodnar and Barbara Tryon at Coffee Club New Year's Breakfast.

ing Hope." When the service ended, Mr. Abercrombie greeted me with a smile as wide as the view from the top of Hunger Mountain. From that time on whenever I entered the library, I was welcomed as a man of refined sensibilities.

— Roy Shepard

Firemen Come Through Again

To the Editor:

In the early icy hours of the morning on Sunday, February 8, 2004, our house filled with smoke and we were awakened by the sound of our smoke detectors. Within minutes, the Fire Chief and two trucks arrived at our house and determined the cause and location of the smoke (which was coming from a malfunctioning

furnace). Chief Tryon and the other men who arrived were extremely competent and helpful, and we greatly appreciated the services of these volunteer community members—especially at four in the morning. We strongly support Chief Tryon's proposal to the Select Board for a direct compensation system and hope that it will be agreed upon in the near future. In addition, we think that it would be a good idea to let the community know the names of the volunteers along with their businesses so that we can support them with our patronage. Having just moved to Monterey a little over a year ago, it gives us great peace of mind to know that we are in such good hands when it comes to emergency situations.

— Andrea & Ron Stone

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Offices.

Tuesday, March 2: Primary election, polling station at Monterey Firehouse.

Saturday, March 6: Full Moon

Wednesday, March 10: Community Dinner, 6 p.m., Fellowship Hall of Monterey Meetinghouse. Local musician Eric Martin will give a talk and demonstration on difference between classical violin technique and fiddling. See p. 7.

Thursday, March 11: Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30–3:30 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Wednesday, March 17: St. Patrick's Day

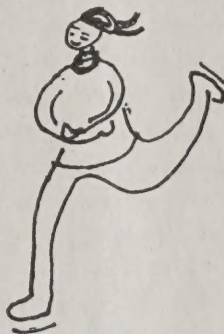
Saturday, March 20: Basketmaking workshops, 9 a.m.–noon and 1–4 p.m., Meetinghouse basement. Two separate sessions taught by Wendy Jensen,

sponsored by Monterey Cultural Council. \$15 fee for materials. See p. 4.

Sunday, March 21: Vernal Equinox

Wednesday, March 23: Don't forget to pick up your cancer drive daffodils at General Store.

Saturday, March 27: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Sarah Gregory Smith. All dances are taught, beginners and children are welcome. Adults \$6, children \$3. Information 528-9385.



The Observer

January 26–February 25

High temp. (2/22)	38°
Low temp. (1/26)	9°
Avg. high temp.	28.4°
Avg. low temp.	8.0°
Avg. temp.	18.2°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	2.74"
Snowfall	23.9"
Season total snowfall	73.5"



Contributors

We are grateful to the following for recent contributions to the *Monterey News*.

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Lauren Paul
Judith Gray
Marjorie Perces

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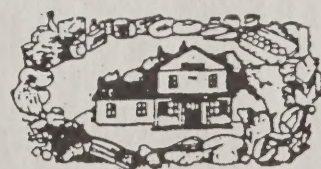
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Contributions from local artists this month:
Pat Arnow, pp. 2, 7, 10, 17, 19; George Emmons, p. 14;
Bonner McAllester, p. 12; Glynis Oliver, p. 17.

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